Harrow u3a Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Statement

Harrow u3a is a learning co-operative and membership charity which enables members to share educational, creative and leisure activities. Members of each u3a draw upon their knowledge, skills and experience to learn from each other (peer to peer learning). Harrow u3a recognises that some people are particularly likely to experience discrimination and harassment and is committed to making sure that we are as inclusive and welcoming as possible.

Aims of this policy

This policy has been drawn up to comply with the Equality Act 2010. The Act stipulates that organisations cannot treat someone unfairly based on what it calls 'protected characteristics', which are:

- ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race
- age
- disability
- religion or belief (including the absence of belief)
- marital or civil partnership status
- sexual orientation
- pregnancy
- gender reassignment
- sex

Harrow u3a will strive to ensure that members do not experience discrimination based on their protected characteristics. This will include ensuring equal access to groups, and appropriate behaviour between members and by Harrow u3a Committee Members and group leaders. The Equality Act highlights that organisations need to consider what **'reasonable adjustments'** can be made to accommodate those who may have special needs. Harrow u3a Committee will review the reasonable adjustments needed for all members and individual members with particular needs as far as possible. Where necessary, the Committee will seek guidance and additional support from the u3a National Office.

Practical approaches to inclusion

Harrow u3a will enable all members to be aware of our policies and procedures in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and accessibility as well as the Member Code of Conduct. Harrow u3a will make reasonable adjustments and take practical steps to ensure a wide range of people can participate in our activities and meetings. This may include:

- Consideration given to the time of day of meetings and their location.
- Consideration of venues for meetings including:
    - Accessible to wheelchair users
    - Access to PA system and a hearing loop

    - Easily accessible by public transport
    - Parking and disabled parking available
    - Disabled toilet facilities available
- Publicity:
    - Using a variety of methods and platforms to communicate externally and raise the profile of the u3a.
    - Making communications available to those who don't have access to the internet
    - Using a range of images that reflect the local community
- Recruiting new members:
    - Doing outreach sessions and contacting agencies working with community groups who may be harder to reach
    - Managing growth so that we ensure that new members can be accommodated
- Monitoring:
    - Monitoring member numbers i.e. the numbers of members who join, re-join and leave each year to identify any trends in membership.
- Tasks and Roles:
    - Ensuring a range of people get their voices heard by encouraging more members to take on roles such as leading or assisting in groups.
    - Ensuring that Group Leaders are made aware of issues in relation to accessibility and what steps they may need to take to meet access requirements.
    - Making Committee Members and Group Leaders aware of training around equality, diversity and inclusion offered by the u3a National Office on an ongoing basis.

Code of Conduct

Harrow u3a has a member code of conduct. The code of conduct outlines that members should abide by the u3as policies and procedures as well as treating each other with dignity and respect. This would include not acting in a way that would be deemed discriminatory or offensive.

Dealing with discrimination and harassment

Where Harrow u3a Committee become aware of any discriminatory practice or harassment, the committee will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned and, where necessary, through invoking formal procedures.

If any member of Harrow u3a feels they have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviour or harassment, this should be reported to the Chair, Study Group Coordinator, Governance Officer or other Committee member. Any matters of concern will be reviewed by the Committee, and a decision will be made, in line with Harrow u3a's constitution and formal procedures, as to what steps will be taken to address the issue.

Definitions

Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents and believing that no one should have poorer life chances because of where, when or whom they were born, or because of other characteristics. Promoting equality is about behaving in a way that tackles inequalities, aiming to ensure that all members are treated fairly, and do not experience discrimination.

Promoting diversity is about recognising that everyone is different and creating an environment that values members and ensuring that the u3a Movement is as accessible as possible to different groups within the community.

Inclusion is about positively striving to meet the needs of different people and taking practical steps to ensure members feel respected.

Direct Discrimination is when a person is treated less favourably because of their ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race, age, disability, religion or belief (including the absence of belief), marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, gender reassignment, political belief.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a condition or requirement is applied equally to all groups of people but has a disproportionately adverse effect on one group.

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to 'protected characteristics' that has the purpose or effect of violating a member's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment is also unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has that same purpose or effect.

Victimisation occurs when a member is treated less favourably than others in the same circumstances because he or she has made a complaint or an allegation of discrimination, harassment or bullying or given information regarding such a complaint or allegation.

This policy was adopted on: 22 June 2026

Review date: June 2028